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Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 AID-05 DHA-02 NSC-05
SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01 ACDA-07 MC-02
IO-13 IGA-02 TRSE-00 COME-00 EB-07 L-03 H-01
OMB-01 /088 W
----------066570 151342Z /47
R 142030Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0612
INFO USCINCSO QUARRYHTS CZ
JCS WASHDC
CSA WASHDC
CNO
CMC WASHDC
CSAF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ASUNCION 2882

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, PA
SUBJ: ASSESSMENT OF U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR FY 1979

REF: STATE 133136

1. THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT HAVE IMPORTANT STRATEGIC OR SECURITY INTERESTS IN PARAGUAY. OUR LONG-STANDING BUT MODEST PROGRAM OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN JUSTIFIED ON POLITICAL AND DEVELOPMENT GROUNDS RATHER THAN IN TERMS OF ITS CONTRIBUTION TO U.S. DEFENSE INTERESTS. U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN GREATLY APPRECIATED BY THE GOP, HAS PROVIDED CONTINUED ACCESS TO THE POLITICALLY INFLUENTIAL MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, AND HAS GIVEN US LEVERAGE FOR ADVANCING AND PROTECTING U.S. INTERESTS ACROSS THE BOARD. NOT THE LEAST OF THESE INTERESTS HAS BEEN PARAGUAY'S RECORD OF SUPPORT FOR THE U.S. POSITION ON KEY ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL FORA. OTHER IMPORTANT U.S.
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INTERESTS IN PARAGUAY INCLUDE PROMOTING RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, SUPRESSING NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING AND INCREASING U.S. EXPORTS.

2. IN THE PAST OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN DEVOTED MAINLY TO PROJECTS CONTRIBUTING TO PARAGUAY'S ECONOMIC GROWTH, SUCH AS ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND THE MAINTENANCE OF

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THE COUNTRY'S ONLY DOMESTIC AIRLINE. ARMS TRANSFERS PER SE
HAVE BEEN A SMALL PART OF OUR ASSISTANCE PACKAGE. PARAGUAY
IS MUCH MORE POORLY ARMED THAN MANY OF ITS NEGHBORS,
AND GIVEN ITS LIMITED RESOURCES, IT IS MOST UNLIKELY THAT
ANY FORESEEABLE ARMS ACQUISITION BY PARAGUAY COULD ALTER
THE REGIONAL ARMS BALANCE. NEITHER HAVE THESE ACQUISITIONS
HAD ANY PERCEPTIBLE IMPACT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WHICH
IS PROCEEDING AT A RAPID PACE. IN MY VIEW, THE RETURN
IN TERMS OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE, ALTHOUGH CONSIDERABLY
LESSENED BY THE TERMINATION OF GRANT MAP THIS FISCAL YEAR,
STILL JUSTIFIED THE CONTINUATION OF A MODEST FMS CASH AND
CREDIT SALES PROGRAM AND PROFESSIONAL-ORIENTED TRAINING (IMET).

3. THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ARE IN THE ORDER REQUESTED PARA 4
OF REFTEL.
A. THE PRESENT THREAT THE GOVERNMENT OF PARAGUAY BELIEVES
IT FACES IS INTERNAL SUBVERSION AND TERRORISM, MAINLY
STEMMING FROM PARAGUAYAN EXILES BASED IN ARGENTINA. ITS
MAJOR STRATEGY IN DEALING WITH THIS THREAT IS CLOSE
COLLABORATION ON BORDER SECURITY WITH A LIKE-MINDED REGIME
IN ARGENTINA AND POLICE VIGILANCE AT HOME. A STATE OF SIEGE
HAS BEEN IN EFFECT CONTINUOUSLY IN PARAGUAY FOR THE PAST 30
YEARS, GIVING THE GOVERNMENT EXTRAORDINARY POWERS OF ARREST
AND DETENTION. SUSPECTED COMMUNISTS AND TERRORISTS HAVE
BEEN PURSUED RELENTLESSLY, INCLUDING PERIODIC WAVES OF MASS
ARRESTS. PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR INTERNAL SECURITY IS
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WITH THE INTERIOR MINISTRY AND THE POLICE. THE MAIN FUTURE
THREAT THE HOST GOVERNMENT BELIEVES IF FACES IS FROM
BOLIVIA, I.E., THAT BOLIVIA MAY FORCIBLY SEEK REVENGE FOR
ITS LOSS TO PARAGUAY IN THE 1932-35 CHACO WAR AND
ATTEMPT TO GAIN RIVER ACCESS TO THE SEA THROUGH PARAGUAY. MOST
PARAGUAYANS, INCLUDING PRESIDENT STROESSNER AND ALL THE
MILITARY LEADERS, FIRMLY BELIEVE IN THE EXISTENCE OF
THIS THREAT, BUT VERY LITTLE HAS BEEN DONE TO COUNTER IT,
EITHER DIPLOMATICALLY OR IN TERMS OF MILITARY PREPAREDNESS.
THE EMBASSY CONSIDERS THAT BOTH OF THESE THREATS ARE GREATLY
EXAGGERATED BY THE GOP, ESPECIALLY THE THREAT FROM BOLIVIA.
SOME SMALL LOCAL COMMUNIST AND TERRORIST ELEMENTS DO EXIST,
BUT AT PRESENT THE EMBASSY DOES NOT VIEW THEM AS A SERIOUS
THREAT TO INTERNAL STABILITY.
B. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROVISION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE
TO PARAGUAY IS SET FORTH IN PARA 1 ABOVE. IF HOSTILE GOVERN-
MENTS CAME TO POWER IN ARGENTINA AND BOLIVIA, THEN THE THREATS
PERCEIVED BY THE GOP COULD BECOME MORE OF A REALITY. IN THE
CASE OF ARGENTINA, ACTIVE SUPPORT OF PARAGUAYAN EXILE
ACTIVITY COULD CAUSE CONSIDERABLE INTERNAL DISORDER, POSSIBLY
BEYOND THE ABILITY OF THE RELATIVELY INEPT PARAGUAYAN SECURITY
FORCES TO CONTROL. THE EMBASSY IS NOT ABLE TO ASSESS THE

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CAPABILITY OF BOLIVIA TO MOUNT AN OFFENSIVE AGAINST PARAGUAY,
IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT IT SHOULD DECIDE TO DO SO AT
SOME FUTURE DATE.
C. PARAGUAY BELIEVES THAT ITSPRESENT MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT
OF SOME 14,000 PERSONNEL IS ADEQUATE TOMAINTAIN INTERNAL
SECURITY. THE SMALL NAVY (2500) AND AIR FORCE (1000)
PROVIDE SOME CAPABILITY TO PATROL BORDER RIVERS, AND TO
MAINTAIN A DOMESTIC AIR SERVICE. IN ADDITION, EIGHT ARMY
"DIVISIONS" WITH A STRENGTH RANGING FROM 500 TO SLIGHTLY
MORE THAN 1000 PERSONNEL EACH, ARE LOCATED THROUGHOUT THE
COUNTRY. WE AGREE THAT THE PRESENT PARAGUAYAN MILITARY
ESTABLISHMENT APPEARS ADEQUATE TO MEET THE INTERNAL THREAT.
TO COMBAT ANY REAL EXTERNAL THREAT, HOWEVER, WOULD
NECESSITATE MOBILIZATION OF A RELATIVELY LARGE UNTRAINED
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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 AID-05 DHA-02 NSC-05
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----------066718 151342Z /47
R 142030Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0613
INFO USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ
JCS WASHDC
CSA WASHDC
CNO WASHDC
CMC WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ASUNCION 2882

THE PRESENT MILITARY FORCE IS EQUIPPED PRIMARILY WITH OLD

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U.S. EQUIPMENT, AND THE COST OF MAINTAINING THIS FORCE IS
COMPARATIVELY SMALL. THE PRESENT MODEST U.S. MILITARY
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IS JUSTIFIABLE ON POLITICAL GROUNDS (SEE
PARA 1 ABOVE) AND SHOULD CONTINUE.
D. SPECIFIC DEFENSE ARTICLES AND SERVICES HOST GOVERNMENT IS
LIKELY TO SEEK TO ACQUIRE ARE AS FOLLOWS:
A. FMS CREDIT (PRIMARILY EXCESS DEFENSE ARTICLES)
(1) HEAVY ENGINEER EQUIPMENT - TO BE USED FOR
IMPROVING AND CONSTRUCTING NEW RURAL ROADS.
(2) SMALL ARMS M-14 RIFLES - TO BE USED TO MODERNIZE
PRESENT OBSOLETE SMALL ARMS IN A FEW SELECTED UNITS.
(3) VEHICLES - JEEPS, SIGNAL CORPS POST HOLE DIGGER -
TO BE USED TO AUGMENT COMMAND AND CONTROL, AND TO
EXTEND ELECTRIC AND TELEPHONE LINES IN INTERIOR.
(4) CREW SERVED WEAPONS - PRIMARILY A FEW OBSOLETE
U.S. 81 MM MORTARS AND 90 MM RECOILESS RIFLES TO
PROVIDE A MINIMAL ANTI-TANK CAPABILITY.
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(5) RADIOS - TO PROVIDE COMMUNICATIONS TO SMALL
MOBILE DETACHMENTS IN INTERIOR, USUALLY WILL BE
SOLE COMMUNICATIONS FOR USE BY CIVIL POPULACE IN
EMERGENCIES.
(6) INDUSTRIAL EQUIPMENT - TO BE USED TO PROVIDE A
MINIMAL SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION RELOADING CAPABILITY.
(7) HEAVY MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT - PRIMARILY AIR
FORCE, TO INCREASE SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN MAINTENANCE
OF AIRCRAFT WHICH ARE USED AS DOMESTIC AIRLINES.
B. FMS CASH: ITEMS PURCHASED WILL BE A MIXTURE OF
MILITARY ITEMS FOR ALL BRANCHES, AND SERVICES, AS
THEY ARE PUBLICIZED IN EXCESS DEFENSE ARTICLE
CIRCULARS.
C. IMET
(1) PERSONNEL TRAINING - IS ALMOST ENTIRELY AT THE
PROFESSIONAL LEVELAND CONSISTS OF A GENERAL OFFICER
TOUR, COMMAND AND ENERAL STAFF COURSE TOUR, AND
STUDENTS FOR PROFESSIONAL COURSES IN THE U.S. AND
CANAL ZONE.
(2) EQUIPMENT - U.S. TRAINING MANUALS, PROJECTORS
AND VIDEO TAPES IN SPANISH.

NO SPECIFIC U.S. INTERESTS CORRESPOND TO THE SUPPLY OF EACH
ITEM ON THIS LIST. OUR GENERAL INTEREST IN PROVIDING MILITARY
ASSISTANCE IS DUSCUSSED IN PARA 1 ABOVE.
F. NONE
G. COMPARABLE EQUIPMENT IS AVAILABLE FROM OTHER SOURCES;
HOWEVER, SUCH EQUIPMENT IS NOT COMPARABLE TO THE COST OF EDA.
PARAGUAY WOULD PURCHASE SMALL QUANTITIES OF SELECTED ITEMS
OF EQUIPMENT IF NOT AVAILABLE FROM U.S. COMPARABLE TRAINING
CAN BE PROVIDED FROM OTHER SOURCES, BUT WILL NOT BE UTILIZED

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IF THERE IS EXPENSE INVOLVED.
H. THE ARMS CONTROL IMPACT OF ANY LIKELY ARMS TRANSFER TO
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PARAGUAY WOULD BE NEGLIGIBLE. OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION
ARE FAR BETTER EQUIPPED THAN PARAGUAY.
I. SINCE THE SUBMISSION OF THE FY 78 CDP THERE HAS BEEN A
GRADUAL AND MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS CLIMATE
IN PARAGUAY. UNDER CONSTANT BUT UNPUBLICIZED PRESSURE FROM
THE USG, THE GOP HAS RELEASED SCORES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS,
INCLUDING THREE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD BEEN HELD FOR ALMOST
TWO DECADES; HAS REMANDED OTHERS TO THE JUDICIAL PROCESS;
AND HAS BELATEDLY RECOGNIZED THAT TORTURE IS AN INTER-
NATIONALLY UNACCEPTABLE PROCEDURE . BOTH THE OPPOSITION AND
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH PRESS ARE GIVEN BROAD LEEWAY TO CRITICIZE
THE GOVERNMENT'S RECORD ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND HAVE BEEN A
BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE ON THE GOP FOR INSTITUTING REFORMS.
THE GOP RECENTLY OPENED ALL DOORS TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, WHO CAME TO PARAGUAY
TO STUDY ITS JUDICIAL SYSTEM AS IT APPLIES TO POLITICAL
PRISONERS. A CLOUD ON THE HORIZON FOR U.S.-PARAGUAYAN
RELATIONS, HOWEVER, IS PARAGUAY'S CONTINUED RELUCTANCE TO
PERMIT AN ON-THE-SITE INVESTIGATION BY THE INTER-AMERICAN
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION. FAILURE OF THE GOP TO ALLOW AN
IAHRC VISIT WOULD RESULT IN A VETO BY THE U.S. OF SOFT LOANS
FOR PARAGUAY FROM THE IFIS. THIS COULD HAVE A FAR-REACHING
IMPACT ON ALL ASQCTS OF ASSISTANCE TO PARAGUAY, INCLUDING
SECURITY ASSISTANCE. (HOWEVER, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE
QUESTION OF THE VISIT WILL HAVE BEEN RESOLVED BEFORE THE NEXT
BUDGET CYCLE.) APPROVAL OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE WOULD PROBABLY
HAVE LITTLE IMPACT WHILE DENIAL OF SUCH ASSISTANCE COULD ONLY
STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF THOSE WITHIN THE GOP WHO REMAIN
UNCONVINCED AS TO THE MERITS OF U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES
AND WOULD RESULT IN A WORSENING OF THE LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS
SITUATION.
J. THE GOP IS NOT A SUPPLIER OF ARMS. THERE WOULD BE LITTLE
PROSPECT OF ENLISTING PARAGUAY'S SUPPORT ON A POLICY OF
RESTRAINT IN PURCHASING THE ARMS IT BELIEVES IT NEEDS,
PARTICULARLY IF IT HAD FIRST SOUGHT UNSUCCESSFULLY TO ACQUIRE
THESE WEAPONS FROM THE U.S.
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K. THE TYPES OF TRAINING OUTLINED IN SECTION D.C.(1) ABOVE ARE
ALMOST TOTALLY ORIENTED TOWARD PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND THE
USE OF U.S. DOCTRINE. PARAGUAY WOULD NEITHER PURCHASE U.S.
TRAINING IF NOT AVAILABLE ON GRANT BASIS, NOR PAY TLA COSTS.

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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